



APPENDIX

**Transcription of National Public Radio Interview With
Customs Inspector Thomas Lepert
November 20, 1979**

We won't go too far with this play on words, but "EUREKA" is usually followed by the phrase, "I found it". How do authorities find the huge quantities of illegal drugs and other contraband which come into the United States each day? A lot of drug traffic occurs at airports where customs agents are on duty. At New York's Kennedy International, reporter Warren Kosak spoke with officer Tom Lepert and asked him how he recognizes smugglers.

There are so many profiles as to what makes a smuggler and actually none of them hold any validity because the smugglers try very hard not to fall into any particular profile. So again, the inspector has to use his own imagination, to his own intuitiveness and to try and make a valid determination as to whether or not a person is carrying narcotics is very, very difficult. It's strange, but things run in patterns you know. You'll go for years and years and years and they will all be body carries. Everybody will have a vest or girdle on, within the crotch area, up and down their back, taped very close to the contours of their body will be cocaine. On a number of cases you find this—right. And it seems to be the mode or the profile for that particular period of time. And then suddenly you'll find nobody carries, everything comes in false-sided suitcases.

The first thing you want to determine is what countries has the person travelled in. If you get an individual who says he was in Nepal for three weeks. And you said what were you doing there? And he says—"I was meditating," this is kind of an odd situation here because not too many tourists go to Nepal to meditate. And especially if you think the guy is coming from an environment in Nepal where he might have been using drugs. And so you would

watch his body contours—you would definitely look at his major suitcase instead of just his hand luggage, determine whether or not in fact he did have a false bottom. And sometimes, you will look into the suitcase you will find drug regalia. You will find a water pipe or a hash pipe or something like that and as you question the person a little carefully, you notice them for signs of nervousness—whatever the case may be and always being very observant to the reaction. I mean, you are looking at this person while you are speaking to him. You are making a judgment decision, a determination—how far do you want to go with this person. And if you have reason to suspect while you are talking to him he is only a number of feet away from you—maybe 2 feet—you are very close to him you are also watching him the way he is dressed, the way he is responding to you, replying to your questions. And if you feel that there is something about this guy—he is betraying nervousness or he shows anxiety over the fact that—you know he is just jittery or whatever—these are little signals to you that you maybe you wouldn't be able to define in terms of afterwards if somebody said, "Well, why did you go after this guy?" You know the overall thing is I had an impression that maybe he had narcotics.

